



LOCAL HISTORICAL FIGURES IN EASTERN VISAYAS

Genecaesar F. Caibio, LPT

Masters of Arts in Education Major in Social Studies

Graduate School

Leyte Normal University

P. Paterno St., Tacloban City, Philippines, 6500

1906161@lnu.edu.ph

Abstract

This study examines the underappreciated historical role of Eastern Visayas in the Philippines, highlighting eight notable figures whose lives and accomplishments showcase the region's identity, resilience, creativity, and leadership. This encompasses early resistance leaders such as Sumuroy, Juan and Felipe Tamayo, and Faustino Ablen, cultural icons including Merlie Alunan and Melvin Corpin, as well as political and military figures like Ruperto Kangleon and Jaime de Veyra, and sports Aira Villegas. The research employs a document-based qualitative methodology, utilizing primary and secondary sources to develop historical narratives highlighting these individuals' regional influence and broader importance. The findings indicate the marginalization of Eastern Visayas within the national historical narrative due to a lack of documents to study these people and frequently eclipsed by Luzon-centric viewpoints. This neglect constrains awareness of the region's identity and sustains a centralized perspective of Philippine history. The study emphasizes the need for more inclusive methods in teaching history, cultural preservation, advocating for incorporating regional narratives into curricula, advancing academic research, and utilizing technology for outreach and preservation of historical facts or narratives. These measures seek to honor the heritage of Eastern Visayas and enhance the communal comprehension of the nation's varied history.

Keywords: *Eastern Visayas, local history, Sumuroy, Faustino Ablen, Jaime de Veyra, Ruperto Kangleon, Merlie Alunan, Melvin Corpin, Aira Villegas, regional identity, Philippine history, historical marginalization, inclusive education, cultural preservation.*



Introduction:

In the Philippine Education system, Philippine History was the spotlight of Elementary Education with little to no emphasis on the High School Level. Philippine History, like other country histories or even world History, started from the pre-historic period, and most books in the Philippines often referred to this period as the "Pre-Spanish" period. But in some ways, it makes sense to see Philippine History through the lens of a notable Filipiniana Historian, Teodoro A. Agoncillo. Agoncillo contested that Philippine Nationalism started during the Spanish Period, specifically in the Execution of the three martyred Pried Padre Mariano Gomez, Padre Jose Burgos, and Padre Jacinto Zamora, known to Gen-Zs as MaJoJa or the well-known GOMBURZA. Agoncillo's book "History of the Filipino People" emphasized this idea, stating that it was after the Gomburza execution that Filipinos, especially the educated class or ilustrados, began to recognize themselves as distinct people with a shared identity and struggle. This shift led to the formation of nationalist organizations such as La Liga Filipina and revolutionary movements like the Katipunan, which culminated in the Philippine Revolution of 1896. However, way before that, contrary to what the chronicler of Magellan's expedition Antonio Pigafetta, they discovered the Philippines; it was way before that the Philippines had its own culture; in fact, it has been to many trades with its neighboring countries in the Malayan Archipelago, namely China, Japan, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Siam, India, and other neighboring Asian countries. Fast forward to Modern History, Philippine History is more centralized to the Island of Luzon; most Philippine Heroes as natives of Luzon, like Andres Bonifacio, Jose Rizal, Emilio Aguinaldo, Melchora Aquino, Juan Luna, Apolinario Mabini, Gregorio del Pilar and even Lukan and Mojica sent by Aguinaldo to head the Katipunan in Samar and Leyte respectively. Even in the Philippines Flag, the 8-rays of the sun refer to 8 provinces that fought the Spaniard's uprising. According to Zaide and other Philippine historians, it was not only the eight provinces that fought against the Spaniards during the Philippine Revolution. While eight provinces—Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Laguna, Batangas, and Nueva Ecija—are specifically commemorated on the Philippine Flag for their early and significant role in the initial phase of the revolution, many other provinces and regions also participated in the struggle for independence against Spain.

The eight rays of the sun on the Philippine Flag represent these eight provinces because they were the first to be placed under martial law by the Spanish colonial government in 1896 due to their active participation in the revolution led by the Katipunan. However, the revolution eventually spread to other parts of the archipelago, with various regions and provinces contributing to the fight for freedom. Little of my students know these persons in the Philippine History of these regions. Leaders like Diego Silang and Gabriela Silang earlier led revolts against Spanish rule in the 18th century, and the region later joined the 1896 revolution. Revolts and revolutionary activities also took place in provinces like Panay (Iloilo), Cebu, and Negros, which had their regional revolutions and uprisings. Though predominantly Muslim regions like Sulu and Maguindanao had resisted Spanish rule for centuries, Mindanao saw uprisings during the revolution, especially among Christianized areas like Misamis and Davao. The Bicolanos also participated in the revolution with uprisings in provinces such as Camarines Sur and Albay.



Various revolts and uprisings occurred throughout the Spanish colonial period, from the early revolts (such as those led by Lakandula, Tamblot, and Dagohoy) to the widespread revolutionary activities of 1896 and beyond.

This is very similar to the institutionalization of Filipino as the national language, often confused with Tagalog. For first-timers who will be aware, consider the similarities between Tagalog and the Filipino language. Though Filipino scholars acknowledge that Filipino is not based on Tagalog, a massive chunk of its language is based on Tagalog. As to Agoncillo, Tagalog is significant in establishing Filipino as the national language. This is true as Zaide emphasizes that Tagalog was chosen as the basis for the national language because much of the early Philippine literature, including poetry and prose, was written in Tagalog. The concentration of intellectualizing language, History, culture, traditional customs, and literary pieces of these prominent Provinces in the Philippines has fostered cultural development in specific areas; it has also contributed to the marginalization of the diverse languages, histories, and cultures of more remote regions in the Philippines. Addressing this imbalance involves recognizing and promoting the richness of local cultures and languages across the archipelago.

As a volunteer teacher in one of the high schools in my hometown, Tanauan, Leyte, I often ask my students who are local figures they know who contribute to Philippine History or even contemporary figures who are still alive. Yet no one knows any. Is it because of the absence of Philippine History in the high school Araling Panlipunan that they forgot their elementary lessons? Or it is because of the concentration of our recognition of the achievements of notable people in Luzon that we forget and take the spotlight of the local figures we have in Eastern Visayas.

Eastern Visayas, a region known when we mention Douglas Mac, Arthur, Romualdez, San Joaquin, Yolanda, Kalangaman, and nothing more, often juggles provinces in Eastern Visayas; some think Samar is a town of Leyte, or Eastern Samar as Samar Province, something like that. It is evident that though they know Eastern Visayas by name, they still need to understand what Eastern Visayas are.

Methods & Materials:

When choosing a local figure, it is essential to assess how the individual's life and actions were shaped by and contributed to their community. This includes understanding their role in local events, connections to broader historical trends, and influence on local culture and society. (Beckett, 2007). This was supported by Mason and Cader (2013), stating that to select Local Figures, the person should ideally reflect broader historical themes or social trends that affected the local area, such as economic, cultural, or political movements. This method enables readers to comprehend the local context within a broader narrative. This research employs a document-based qualitative methodology to investigate prominent local figures in Eastern Visayas using primary and secondary sources, excluding interviews. Document-based analysis entails examining excerpts, quotations, or complete passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys (Patton, 2002). This study attempts to create rich historical biographies by reading



documents, books, and articles that can bring out the lives and activities of influential people. Direct sources, including official documents, personal writings, and artifacts, will provide evidence of their actions, beliefs, and roles in society. Secondary sources such as biographies and scholarly works will position these individuals in the broader social and historical picture of Eastern Visayas, giving a deeper sense of their lasting contributions. Online articles and news sources will supplement this research, providing contemporary views and updated information about these figures. Data will be analyzed through thematic and contextual approaches, categorizing findings into crucial themes that illustrate each figure's contributions and their impact on regional history and culture. This methodology aims to yield a comprehensive narrative highlighting the personal experiences and broader historical significance of the local figures studied.

Results and Discussion:

Sumuroy: The Hero of Palapag

This Local Figure is in the small town of Palapag, Northern Samar. He was known during the Spanish Colonization in the Philippines; Contrary to belief, the abuses of the Spaniards do not concentrate in Luzon Island alone in fact, Fray Juan De Paz, in his book Universal Oracle of Asia tries to resolve moral dilemmas in the Philippines, which he cites in the abuse faced by the farmers, especially in rural areas, where both native Filipino and Spanish Soldier exploited them in some ways, like Spanish tribute demands, forced labor (which was a part of the encomienda system), and the oppressive policies of Spanish colonial rule. However, one critical aspect of the revolt was the burden placed on the local population to support the Galleon Trade to be sent to the shipyard in Cavite. The Galleon Trade or the Manila-Acapulco trade established a monopolistic foreign trade by Spain through only two ports, Manila and Acapulco, in the Philippines and Mexico respectively.

According to Filipinos in History (1994) and Ang mga Pilipino Sa Ating Kasaysayan: A Centennial Resource Book, Sumuroy led the Samareño Revolt from 1649 to 1650 for this very cause. He was born to a babaylan in Palapag and later became a prominent leader and chieftain, guiding his people in their resistance against Spanish rule. A skilled sailor, Sumuroy served as a Castellano and pilot at a small fort in his hometown, which exempted him from paying tribute or performing the required servicio for the Spanish government. This revolt stands out for a number of reasons, foremost as a phenomenon of anti-Spanish colonial rule (Verano, 2016). It was one of the earliest and most serious rebellions against the Spanish Empire's repressive policies in the Philippines. The reasons that led to the revolt included social and economic grievances over high tributes and coercive labor imposed through the system of encomienda. The exploitative systems created great resentment among the Filipino people, and the rebellion highlighted the onuses of tribute and servicio-forced labor suffered by the natives. Sumuroy, who proved to be an astute mariner, became a leader and headman of his community in Palapag, an excellent example of indigenous leadership's role in the struggle against colonial rule. His role as a babaylan spiritual leader represents the fusion of spiritual and



political power within Filipino communities during this time. Even though the Spanish authorities eventually crushed the rebellion, it had an important message that spoke of the possibility of local resistance and the yearning for self-governance. Sumuroy's revolt embodies the emerging seeds of Filipino nationalism and unified resistance against colonization at the regional level. His leadership was portrayed in folklore as heroic and mythical. He epitomized bravery and patriotism. Sumuroy's resistance is far beyond local significance because it embodies the larger narrative of Filipino resilience and the quest for freedom, which makes it an inspirational element of Philippine history and identity.

Juan and Felipe Tamayo: Leader of Pulahanes in Jaro

Juan and Felipe Tamayo, or the Tamayo brothers as what Borrinaga said, is one of the lowkey Local Figures in the History of the Eastern Visayas. In the *Leyte-Samar Shadows: Essay on the History of the Eastern Visayas* by Professor Rolando Borrinaga of the University of the Philippines Manila, the Tamayo brothers were discussed. The Tamayo brothers specifically Juan Tamayo are one of the prominent Figures of the Pulahan Movement in the Province of Leyte Specifically located in the foothills of the Jaro, Leyte. Though not the founder of the Pulahanes, the Tamayo Brothers played a significant role in this organization. The Pulahan is a para-military organization that is fighting for an egalitarian society, overthrowing the Spanish government and letting qualified residents reign. In the decade-long absence of Papa Faustino Ablen, Juan Tamayo Assumed temporary leadership, in fact before assuming temporary leadership, he was the second-ranking official of the organization next to Ablen. He was threatening also the Americans, but putting a head price of Juan Tamayo 1,000, his part in the Pulahanes ended when he was killed in Zumaraga, Samar while he was recruiting natives. Felipe Tamayo as described by Borrinaga was unassuming and pragmatic, as he had just come out of the blue and surrendered. Despite that, they headed the tenacious and scary Pulahan resistance against the American Constabulary. He was threatened by the fact that he caused the suspension of the mailing service for a month by attacking the mail courier in Jaro, where there was a station for the US Army and telephone station of the Philippine Constabulary, which seems to not stop Felipe Tamayo. Despite the threatening nature of Felipe Tamayo, American versions downplayed Felipe, even though his resistance required massive American Trop Reinforcement (Borrinaga, 2008). Felipe Tamayo is somewhat opposite to his brother Juan, in fact in the statement by Jaime C. De Veyra that Felipe Tamayo supported his Governorship by helping his administration to pacify Leyte. When peace reigned, Felipe sank back to his origin and helped De Veyra rise his national prominence. Felipe resumed his practice as a tambalan for which he also retained local fame.



Faustino Ablen: head of the Dios-dios movement and the Pulahanes

Faustino Ablen, often referred to as Papa meaning “Pope” headed the Pulahan Resistance in Leyte 1902-0907 and the Dios-dios movement 1887-1889, Pulahanes as what it is called is a paramilitary organization as discussed in the Juan and Felipe Tamayo section. The Pulahanes were called Pulahan because of the warriors who wore red shirts. They are based in Jaro, Leyte. Despite the 6 months long “official revolution” in Eastern Visayas due to the surrender of Lukban in Samar and Mojica in Leyte as sent by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Pulahanes' resistance lasted for 5 years. 1902-1907. In fact, when the Katipunan broke out in Manila, the Pulahanes became a full-blown movement as Katipunan of Leyte, under the influence of Andres Bonifacio. After Bonifacio's death the Pulahanes under Ablen, looked for Gen. Aguinaldo's leadership, which later turned to disappointment. The disappointment was caused when Aguinaldo compromised the Philippine Revolution against the Spaniards in the Biak-na-Bato, and when they found out that they were not part of the official roster of Aguinaldo's Revolutionary Army. The so-called “official insurrection of Leyte” was under the supervision of Gen. Ambrocio Mojica appointed by Gen. Aguinaldo turning him the military-political governor of Leyte. Despite fighting Resistance since the Spanish occupation the Pulahanes were not recognized. Despite that dismay, they still continued their movement but were advised to stay away from conflicts between the Americans and the “official revolutionist”. This did not last for long as their families became casualties of the conflicts and their crops were razed, this forced them to become partisans of War. Reluctantly the members were forced to side and support the revolutionist.

It was when the Pulahanes decided to fight the Americans the “official insurrection” collapsed, thus Pulahan picked up a fight they did not create and fight five more years. Under the temporary leadership of the Tamayo brothers, the Pulahan gained, momentum. When the leadership was turned over to Ablen, Ablen led the Pulahanes to slaughter and suicidal attacks in 1906 and 1907. This was expected by the Americans after their official misrepresentation of Juan Tamayo's death, and that of Papa and the apocalypse that failed to occur in 1900 died the enthusiasm of the Dios-dios and the Pulahanes. Aggrieved Felipe, appealed for calm and moderation and proposed sibandang the movement. Despite that, the demoralized movement under the leadership of Papa continued and Felipe pulled out Jaro's contingent and Tiya Goring- the mother figure of the movement. In the battle of Tabontabon, Leyte became the final showdown between Papa and Felipe after their peaceful breakup.

Faustino Ablen is a significant local figure in Eastern Visayas due to his leadership of the Pulahanes' resistance against Spanish and American colonizers. Rooted in a blend of indigenous spirituality and Christianity, his movement symbolized the region's cultural identity and resilience. Excluded from Aguinaldo's official revolution, Ablen continued the fight, representing marginalized communities and extending the revolutionary spirit in Leyte and Samar. His grassroots movement



highlighted the power of local leadership in resisting colonial injustices. Ablen's legacy endures as a testament to the courage and determination of Leyteños and Samareños, embodying their rich history and cultural pride.

Ruperto Kangleon: A Guerilla to Secretary of National Defense

Kangleon was born in Macrohon, Leyte. His education does not concentrate on one location his elementary studies in Surigao, his High School in Cebu, and his College in Manila, but the military profession attracted him, and went to the Philippine Constabulary Academy in Baguio City. He became the Provincial Commander of Bohol and Cebu before World War II broke out in the Philippines. Due to WWII, he became the commanding officer of the 81st Infantry Division in Samar. Due to his great leadership of the guerilla force in the Province of Leyte, he convinced Gen. MacArthur to land in Leyte rather than in Luzon. The fame of Kangleon was smeared when he surrendered to the Japanese Forces he was rescued by Graciano Kapili in Butuan, After his freedom he re-united the guerillas in Leyte, where Captains Atilano Cinco, Alejandro Balderan, and Gordon Lang submitted to Kangleon's leadership, but Blas Miranda refused who took Kangleons surrender as an issue. When Miranda vanishes after a jap[anese raid in his camp, the leaderless men of Miranda turned to Kangleon. His exceptional love for the country was tested when his four children were held hostage by the Japanese for him to surrender but Kangleon refused. Kangleons impressive performance in Leyte was recognized by Gen. MacArthur by promoted him to Colonel, and was later appointed to Military Governor of Leyte. He also became the civil governor upon the re-establishment of the Commonwealth. Under the administration of Manuel Roxas, he was appointed as the Secretary of the National Defense. After his resignation from Quirino's administration, he entered politics and won a Senatorial set chaired the committee on Veterans and Military Pensions, and was Vice Chair of the Committee on National Defense.

In conclusion, Ruperto Kangleon's life exemplifies resilience, patriotism, and exceptional leadership. From his humble beginnings in Macrohon, Leyte, to his rise as a key figure in the fight for Philippine liberation during World War II, Kangleon's contributions to the military and government remain a testament to his unwavering dedication to the nation. His ability to unite guerrilla forces, even under immense personal sacrifice, and his subsequent roles in governance and politics highlight his profound impact on both local and national history. Kangleon's legacy as a defender of freedom and public servant solidifies his place as a celebrated figure not only in Local History but also in Philippine history.



Jaime C. De Veyra: Advocate of Freedom and Filipino Identity

Jaime C. De Veyra was from Tanauan, Leyte, he was referred to by American Bureaucrats as anti-American with pro-Republic sympathies. 15 years old Jaime went to Manila to attend Colegio de San Juan de Letran and finished a Bachelor of Arts in 1893 and studied another two years at the University of Sto. Tomas. When the Philippine revolution broke out it made him go home and join the fight against the Spaniards, and served as Secretary to General Ambrosio Mojica. He co-founded El Nuevo Día with Osmeña, a publication critical of U.S. colonial policies. His editorial work brought scrutiny from American authorities, but the publication avoided censorship. De Veyra later worked for La Nueva Era and El Renacimiento, continuing his critique of colonial rule. His journalistic efforts eventually paved the way for his political career, starting as a municipal councilor in Cebu City in 1901. He was elected a municipal councilor in Cebu in 1901, and the following year he was chosen municipal vice-president. He was elected president of Cebu's electoral parliament in 1903. De Veyra was appointed Director of the Liceo de Maasim in Leyte in 1904 and remained there until 1905. De Veyra was the first elected Filipino Governor of Leyte. He was acknowledged by American officialdom for suppressing the Pulahanes and improving peace and order in Leyte, which gained prestige, and later got elected for two terms as Leyte representative in the Philippine Assembly. Pacifying Leyte, the fierce Pulahan Leader Felipe Tamayo helped De Veyra after Tamayo's surrender, however, De Veyra did not share this honor during his influential and younger years which brought him national recognition. From 1907-1912. From 1913 to 1916, he was appointed one of four Filipino members of the Philippine Commission and later appointed as executive secretary of the Commission. By 1917 he served as Filipino resident commissioner in Washington DC until 1923. While in the US De Veyra advocated for Philippine sovereignty and testified on economic and political issues affecting the islands while Collaborating with U.S. officials, the press, and civic organizations to promote Philippine autonomy. One of his roles in Philippine independence from the US is that he opposed the findings of the Wood-Forbes Commission, which recommended delaying Philippine independence. After retiring from his role as Resident Commissioner, de Veyra continued advocating for Philippine autonomy and other social causes. An honorary doctorate was bestowed upon him in 1961 by the Ateneo Municipal de Manila. The independence of the Philippines could not have been achieved without the work of de Veyra and his contemporaries.

The official recognition of Filipino as the national language was another area in which De Veyra was instrumental. As the first chairperson of the Institute of National Language (Surian ng Wikang Pambansa), established in 1936, he led a panel of experts that evaluated Philippine languages. Under his leadership, the institute recommended Tagalog as the basis for the national language due to its wide use, rich literary tradition, and historical significance, including its role in the Philippine Revolution. This recommendation laid the foundation for promoting and eventually adopting Filipino as the national language in the 1940s.



De Veyra made exceptional contributions to regional and national history. As Leyte's first elected Filipino governor, he established peace and order during the Pulahanes uprising and improved governance in the province. His ongoing impact is shown by his support of Filipino as the national language, criticism of the Wood–Forbes Commission's recommendations, and advocacy of Philippine freedom. His work bridged national and regional identities, so enhancing Eastern Visayas' historical legacy.

Merlie Alunan: Mother of Waray-waray Poetry

Merlie Alunan was born in Iloilo but finally has her permanent residency in Tacloban. Graduated from Silliman University in 1974 with a Master's in Creative Writing. She taught at the University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College's Creative Writing Center, where she founded VisWrite in the late 1980s, alongside literature professors and literary critics Victorio N. Sugbo and David Genotiva. In 2008, she was honored with the title of Professor Emeritus upon her retirement. She has won Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature multiple times and her recent work *Tales of the Spiderwoman*. She also won the National Book Awards - Philippines multiple times, with her recent work *Running with Ghosts and Other Poems* in 2019.

Indeed, Alunan has had a profound influence on the region's literary and cultural identity, and I can testify that, I have seen Alunan's name in my 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World subject in Senior High School I read *Amina Among the Angels* and *Poems of Anima*. Although born in Iloilo, her permanent residency in Tacloban and her contributions to literature in Eastern Visayas make her an integral part of the community. Alunan's leadership at the UP Visayas Tacloban College Creative Writing Center, where she founded VisWrite, nurtured countless writers in the region. By weaving her creative talents with her advocacy for regional identity, Alunan has strengthened the cultural fabric of Eastern Visayas, making her a deserving local figure.

Melvin Corpin: The Musical Maestro of Eastern Visayas

The program is about to start; as a common practice, the program would begin with a Prayer, and a lady will appear on a big screen singing *Amay Namon*; this tone of the well-known waray-waray version of *Amay Namon* is sung and known to everyone, especially to the Catholic population of Eastern Visayas. Even the *Himaya sa Diyos* sang during Mass, which has reached far-flung areas and barrios. However, as an ordinary citizen, you may know the tone of these songs but need to recognize who composed them. Some may realize this, especially those in church music ministry, but as I ask my class in High School if they know Melvin Corpin, this is the case. Melvin Corpin is born Caibiran, Biliran. Melvin Corpin's musical journey began at an early age, starting piano lessons at just four years old and composing music by the time he was ten. This early foundation paved the way for a prolific career, during which he composed over 500 pieces, including hymns and choral works.



His influence on the music scene in Eastern Visayas is significant, particularly highlighted by his role in directing the choir for the Papal Mass led by Pope Francis in 2015, where many of his original compositions were performed (Vergara, two further developed his love of music when he took and graduated Bachelor in Music Education in Leyte Normal University with cum laude. He became the choirmaster of Melvin Corpin's profound music. His legacy is closely tied to his role as the musical director of the St. Therese Educational Foundation of Tacloban Inc. (STEFTI) Children's Choir. Under his guidance, STEFTI gained national recognition, securing multiple awards at the National Music Competition for Young Artists. Corpin's arrangements, such as "I Will Be Your Melody," composed in 2005 and performed by the STEFTI Children's Choir, showcase his ability to create pieces that resonate with both the performers and the broader audience.

One of his most significant involvements was in the Archdiocese of Palo, which commissioned him to be the choirmaster of the grand choir of the different choirs in the Archdiocese to sing at the Papal Visit in Tacloban. Here are some of the works of Melvin Corpin:

- The Evangelization Mass Set
- The Jubilee Mass Set
- The Pasaka Festival Hymn of Tanauan, Leyte
- The Pintados Hymn of the Pintados-Kasadyaan Festival of Tacloban
- Ha Imo la
- Para ha Imo

Melvin Corpin's life and work exemplify the significant role of music in preserving and enriching the cultural and spiritual identity of Eastern Visayas. His contributions, from composing beloved hymns to mentoring young talents and leading historic events like the Papal Mass, highlight his lasting impact on the region's heritage. Corpin's legacy continues to inspire, making him a true local figure whose artistry and dedication resonate across generations.

Aira Villegas: Olympic Bronze Medalist

Aira Villegas, born on August 1, 1995, in Tacloban City, began her boxing journey at age nine, trained by her older brother Rominick. Motivated by her brother and a desire to support her family, she pursued a professional boxing career, eventually joining the Leyte Sports Academic Center. At 16, Villegas joined the Association of Boxing Alliances in the Philippines (ABAP), marking the start of her amateur career.

In 2012, she won gold at the Smart PLDT ABAP National Competition and repeated her success at the 2014 Philippine National Games. She later earned a bronze medal at the 2019 Southeast Asian Games in the women's bantamweight division and competed in the IBA Women's World Championships (2019, 2022) and the 2022 Asian Games. Most recently, Villegas brought pride to



Tacloban by winning a bronze medal in the Women's Light Flyweight Division at the Paris Summer Olympics.

Villegas's accomplishments not only highlight her athletic prowess but also underscore her perseverance and dedication, which serve as an inspiration to the people of Eastern Visayas. Her journey from humble beginnings in Tacloban to competing on the world stage demonstrates the potential of athletes from the region. By winning medals in prestigious national and international competitions, including the Paris Summer Olympics, Villegas has brought honor and recognition to her hometown and the entire Eastern Visayas region.

Recommendations:

Integrate Local History in Educational Curricula

The Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education must require regional historical figures to be included in school curricula. For Eastern Visayas, figures like Sumuroy, Ablen, and De Veyra can make students' textbooks and lessons more exciting and relevant because they provide role models that can be compared with the nation's collective past.

Promote Academic Research on Regional History

Universities and other educational institutions should prioritize funding, conduct research, and support studies on the local history and culture of Eastern Visayas. Research projects can be about local history rather than internationally known concepts, such as bullying, absenteeism, and social media use. Such efforts can reveal untold stories and bring marginalized narratives to light, thus contributing to a more comprehensive local and national history. Research in schools should promote studying local history in order to promote the intellectualization of the locals towards their own history.

Use Technology and Media to Reach Out

Develop digital platforms and documentaries with engaging, interactive content with the stories of figures in Eastern Visayas. Campaigns through various social media outlets can help in directly reaching the youth audience more effectively while further dispersing stories of the region.

Events for Culture and History

Festivals, exhibits, and seminars should be held by local governments and cultural organizations to celebrate the achievements of the historical figures of Eastern Visayas. This can make the residents proud while educating the public about the rich heritage of the region.



Promote Community Involvement in Historical Preservation

To enable local communities to actively participate in the intellectualization, preservation, and promotion of their history, they should be given the authority to do so. It is possible to ensure that the contributions made by Eastern Visayas to Philippine history will continue to be relevant in the future through the implementation of programs such as oral history projects, community-based museums, local libraries, and historical marker initiatives.

It is possible to offer the stories of heroes, artists, and leaders of Eastern Visayas the attention they deserve through these proposals, which would strengthen both the regional and national identities of the aforementioned people. It is possible for the Philippines to celebrate its diverse heritage and motivate future generations to value and preserve their shared history by utilizing a historical narrative that is more inclusive.

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